

Black Vermont Farming

by Crystal Zhou



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1. Introduction

foreword

By Professor Khyree Davis
Black Studies | Middlebury College

This project is a powerful reminder of the importance of education and engaged study for burgeoning intellectuals. When anyone conducts and produces work that is deeply grounded in community study and routine reciprocity, I am reminded of the profound power and responsibilities of public intellectualism and activist-scholarship. This particular project is as necessary and moving as many that I have read before and, for me, serves as a reminder that we can and should learn lessons from our students, just as they learn from us.

Crystal Zhou's *Black Vermont Farming* zine is the first undergraduate project I have seen completed since becoming a professor and moving to Vermont. This project emerges from several semesters of engaged study in Black geographies, Black food studies, and rural geopolitics in and outside of the classroom, as well as Zhou's own experience working in local agricultural initiatives. As impressive as such a project would always be, I must admit to my deep appreciation and admiration for a project of this scope to be produced by one of Black Studies at Middlebury College's first graduates and my first advisee to graduate in my time at this institution.

Zhou once credited her interest in pursuing this project to my Black Geographies course, but I want to suggest that Zhou's recognition of the importance of space and place for the study of race and racism extend beyond that particular moment. Before my arrival at Middlebury College, she was already involved in student activism and volunteer work at the local community farming initiative. So, while my course may have granted her specific grammars through which she can understand and theorize race, space, and place, in truth, the makings of this project were already in the works before she stepped foot in my class. As a scholar also working on questions of space, place, and Blackness in Vermont, I must profess the profound importance of the documents and connections born out of this project. This project's commitments to fostering community between Black farmers, other farmers of color, and students and other community members invested in farming work and land justice is one crux of its importance and impact. However, the same could be said about the archive of Black farming that this has endeavored to create. Scholars of Black history or historical moments in Black life and living too often are confronted with a reality where Black peoples, institutions, and communities have failed to be documented or preserved within documentation. In many ways, Black Vermont Farming will contribute to mitigating such routine erasures for the future study of this moment in the study of Vermont, rural agricultural politics, and Black farming, more generally.

It is my humble belief that this project will serve several crucial functions in its reception to the public. There are two contributions that I want to consider in closing my remarks on this remarkable project. On the one hand, I am confident that this project will demonstrate to other students that undergraduate research can be engaging, interesting, profound, and applicable all at the same time. I hope that this comes to inspire a wealth of future research from our students who view this as a model of what community-engaged scholarship might look like. On the other hand, I see this project as more widely inspirational for the study of Black farming, Black food, and Black Vermont. This project now serves as public record and archive for a particularly understudied moment in Black Vermont and Black farming. Its impact will continue to unfold over time.

This poster went out in November 2023.

Winter Term Workshop Taught by Crystal Zhou

Sign up [go.ideal](#) before Dec 11

Black Farming, Black Food, Black Studies

Sponsored by Climate Action Project and New Perennials

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, white farmers owned 6,773 farms and accounted for 1,185,550 acres of land in Vermont. In contrast, the census showed a total of 17 Black owned farms who steward 3,960 acres.

As Vermont continues to grow, come with me on my Black Studies senior project to learn about how Black Vermont farmers center food sovereignty, afroindigenous regenerative agriculture, and community oriented earth work.

Together as a winter term workshop, we will read chapters from Ashanté M. Reese's *Black Food Matters* and *Black Food Geographies* and Leah Penniman's *Farming While Black* and *Black Food Wisdom* to explore how Black Studies offer a lens through which we can engage in community oriented activism and research. Coupled with 4 weekly farmer dinners from a diverse range of Black Vermont farmers, we will collaboratively and collectively create a public facing zine that highlights the importance of Black land ownership in Vermont.

This project is built on a summer of senior work research and 2 years of farming experience in Vermont BIPOC foodways.

What are we researching?

How do Black Vermont farmers approach food sovereignty, afroindigenous regenerative agriculture, and community oriented earth work in their farming?

Why are we researching this?

Vermont's farming landscape is dominated by white farmers. In fact, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, white farmers owned 6,493 farms and accounted for 1,161,553 acres of land in Vermont. In contrast, the census showed a total of 18 Black owned farms who steward 3,152 acres.

This project researches how land-based discrimination for Black farmers have resulted in these statistics, despite which remarkable resilience in Black farms and communities still persist. Some Black farmers come into farming already with a profound knowledge of the local ecosystem, traditional farming methods, and community based farming models. Others learn from farm immersion programs and begin afresh.

Black farmers, by virtue of their existence, contribute to the preservation and creation of cultural heritage.

Pan-African heirloom crops and culinary practices enrich local food systems and celebrate diversity wherever in the world. This project grounds the EIGHTEEN Black owned farms in Vermont within this incredibly diverse tradition.



Class Syllabus:

	TUESDAY [5-6PM]	THURSDAY [5-7PM]	FRIDAY [5-7PM]
WEEK 1	1/9 Innovation Hub Introductions HW: Leah Penniman's Farming While Black	1/11 Hillcrest AMBER ARNOLD SUSU CommUNITY Farm	
WEEK 2	1/16 Innovation Hub Discussion HW: Ashanté M. Reese's Black Food Matters		1/19 Innovation Hub ABDOULAYE NIANE Khelcom Farm
WEEK 3	1/23 Innovation Hub Discussion HW: Ashanté M. Reese's Black Food Geographies	1/25 Innovation Hub ZAKA CHERY Calabash Gardens	
WEEK 4	1/30 23 ADK Art Making HW: Leah Penniman's Black Earth Wisdom		2/2 Innovation Hub HAZEL ADAMS SHANGO Flying Buffalo Farm

2. Frameworks

text visited

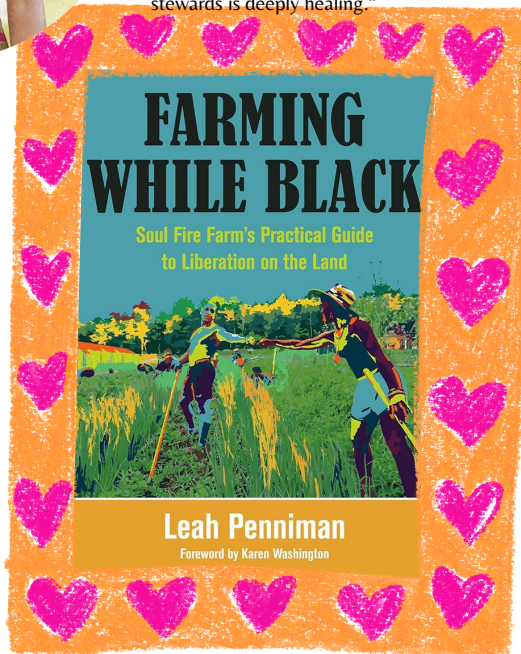


REVOLUTION IS
BASED ON LAND.
LAND IS THE BASIS
OF ALL
INDEPENDENCE.
LAND IS THE BASIS
OFFREEDOM,
JUSTICE,
AND EQUALITY.

-MALCOLM X



“Learning about Carver, Hamer, Whatley, and New Communities, I realized that during all those years of seeing images of only white people as the stewards of the land, only white people as organic farmers, only white people in conversations about sustainability, the only consistent story I’d seen or been told about Black people and the land was about slavery and sharecropping, about coercion and brutality and misery and sorrow. And yet here was an entire history, blooming into our present, in which Black people’s expertise and love of the land and one another was evident. When we as Black people are bombarded with messages that our only place of belonging on land is as slaves, performing dangerous and backbreaking menial labor, to learn of our true and noble history as farmers and ecological stewards is deeply healing.”



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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
FARMING WHILE BLACK





Who and what dominates main stream environmentalism?

What responsibility comes with owning land?



"MY PARTNER AND I HALF JOKE THAT WE HAVE THREE CHILDREN, NESHIMA, EMET, AND THIS LAND. YOUR LAND BECOMES A FAMILY MEMBER AND A DAILY OBLIGATION. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP TO ENTER INTO AFTER DETAILED RESEARCH AND WITH CARE.

**OWNING OUR OWN LAND, GROWING
OUTWORN EDUCATING OUR OWN YOUTH,
PARTICIPATING IN OUR OWN HEALTH
CARE AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS-- THAT IS
THE SOURCE OF REAL POWER AND
DIGNITY.**

**TO FARM WHILE BLACK IS AN ACT OF
DEFIANCE AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY
AND A MEANS TO HONOR THE
AGRICULTURAL INNGENUITY OF OUR
ANCESTORS.**

**WHILE MY PRACTICE IS PRIMARILY ROOTED IN VODOU, MY SPIRITUALITY IS AS DIVERSE
AND COMPLEX AS MY FAMILY'S MIXED ETHNIC HERITAGE: HAITIAN, BLACK AMERICAN,
HEBREW, FRENCH, ENGLISH, CHEROKEE, TAINO. I AM MANYE, YES. I AM ALSO A
JEWISH, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST, HAITIAN VODOUISANT, INITIATE OF ROYA, AND
WORSHIPER OF IFA. I MAKE SPIRITUAL HERBAL BATHS, CHANT TORAH IN MY
SYNAGOGUE, DANCE TO ORES DIVINE WITH SHELLS AND BONES, AND RECEIVE DREAM
MESSAGES FROM THE ANCESTORS. FOR ME THE TRUTH IS AT THE INTERSECTION OF
OUR MULTIPLICITOUS WAYS OF KNOWING THE SACRED...**

Did you ever make any traditions playing outside as a child?

In what ways are our religion and spirituality tied to agriculture and the natural world?

WE ARE GUESTS AND STEWARDS ON THIS EARTH, NOT OWNERS, AND NEED TO

How do we build reciprocal relationship with land? **BEHAVE AS SUCH. ,**

**THE ESSENCE OF PRAYER AND SACRIFICE IS THE ACKLOWDGEMENT OF THE BEING-
NESS OF THE NONHUMAN ENERGIES IN OURWORLD."**

Do you have family members or ancestors who are farmers? Where and how did they farm? What stories do they tell?





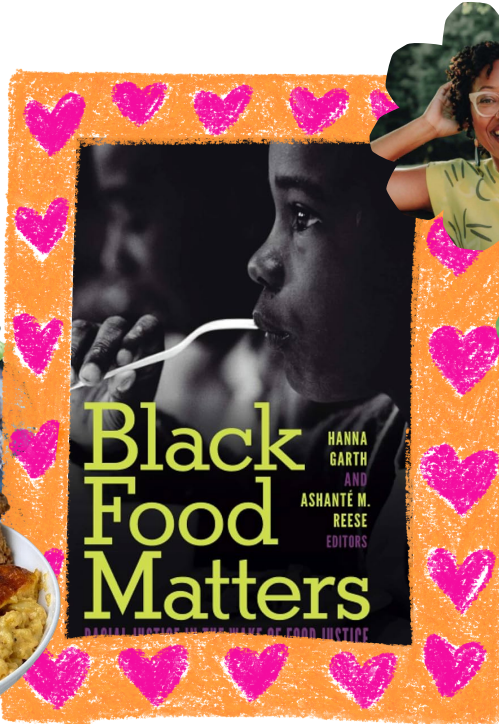
text visited



“Black Food Matters brings together authors who examine production, distribution, and consumption through the lens of (anti-)blackness to explore themes of fugitivity and disposability, the consumability of Blackness and Black food culture, and the everyday resistances that are produced in the making of Black Food Geographies.

There is nothing broken. The inequities [the food system] produces are functions of how it should work, as the push to maximize production and consumption while devaluing labor are integral to capitalist productions.”

READING BLACK LIFE, REFUSAL, AND SELF DETERMINATION IN FOOD.



What Survives?

- ★ *Chapter 1: In the Food Justice World but Not of It: Everyday Black Food Entrepreneurship (29)*
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- ★ *Chapter 4: Blackness and "Justice" in the Los Angeles Food Justice Movement (107)*
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- Chapter 6: Soul Food Gentrification: Food, Racial Heritage Tourism, and the Redevelopment of Black Space in Miami (158)*
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"INSTITUTIONS OF SLAVERY RELIED ON AFRICA'S DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF EVERYTHING FROM CASH CROPS TO MEDICINAL HERBS AND SUPPLEMENTARY GARDENS, SO THAT THE ENSLAVED WORKED FROM SUNUP TO SUNDOWN CARING FOR PLANTS, RAISING ANIMALS, AND NURSING CHILDREN -- THEIR OWN AND THE SLAVE OWNING CLASS.

Where else have enslaved Africans left their mark?

How does this contrast against assumptions of unskilled vs skilled labor?

FOOD IS A VEHICLE THAT ENABLES THE BLACK RESIDENTS OF COOL SPRING TO SIMULTANEOUSLY ENGAGE MAINSTREAM AMERICA AND LIVE ON THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY BY PROVIDING A CERTAIN DEGREE OF AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE.

Why might a person choose to be bonded to the land after a history of enslavement? What are the advantages and disadvantages of living a rural life?

HUNGER AS ONE OF THE GREATEST FORMS OF OPPRESSION IN THE UNITED STATES... THE BPP UNDERSTOOD THAT FEEDING PEOPLE WAS A CENTRAL TENET OF LIBERATION."

Who benefits from a militant depiction of the BPP?

What happens when people are fed?

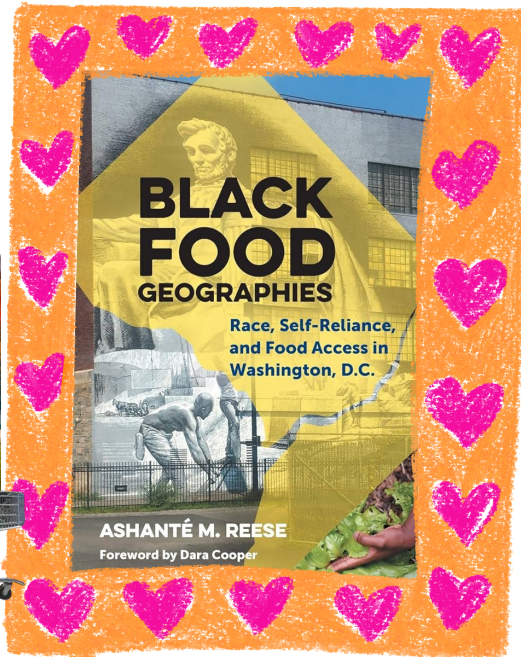
What is street food?
Where is street food?
Who makes street food?
Who delivers your food?



text visited

“Black Food Geographies is a love letter to and an affirmation of what is possible when we listen to Black people’s food stories beyond an all-encompassing narrative of lack.

The historical and ongoing significance of race at the intersections of capitalist accumulation, dispossession, and residential segregation requires an understanding of how the geographic distribution of food is a reflection of anti-Blackness and oppression as much as it is about class and economic capital.”



“HOW HAVE BLACK PEOPLE BEEN CHALLENGED BY AND RESISTED UNEQUAL FOOD ACCESS?”

HOW DO QUIET FOOD REFUSALS SHOW UP IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EXAMINE LACK, CHOICE, AND DECISION MAKING AS DYNAMIC AND INTERRELATED PROCESSES IN ACCESSING FOOD?”

★ *Introduction:* Black Food, Black Space, Black Agency

Chapter 1: Come to Think of It, We Were Pretty Self-Sufficient
Race, Segregation, and Food Access in Historical Context

★ *Chapter 2:* There Ain’t Nothing in Deanwood
Navigating Nothingness and the UnSafeway

Chapter 3: What Is Our Culture? I Don’t Even Know
Nostalgia and Memory in Evaluations of Food Access

Chapter 4: He’s Had That Store for Years
The Historical and Symbolic Value of Community Market

★ *Chapter 5:* We Will Not Perish; We Will Flourish
Community Gardening, Self-Reliance, and Refusal

Conclusion: Black Lives and Black Food Futures





"THEORIZING RACISM IN THE FOOD SYSTEM DEEPENS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH FOOD INSTITUTIONS ARE IMPLICATED IN CONTINUED DISINVESTMENT IN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS.

FOR JUST OVER FOUR YEARS, I FOCUSED ON THESE EVERYDAY WAYS RESIDENTS NAVIGATED FOOD INEQUITIES. WHAT EMERGED ARE THESE QUIET FOOD REFUSALS: THE WAYS THAT BLACK RESIDENTS EXPRESSED AGENCY, CARE, AND DISSENT IN THEIR FOOD PROCUREMENT PRACTICES, IN THEIR MEMORIES, AND IN THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

What does a community garden seek to accomplish? How does it do so?
What does it need in order to do so?

IN WASHINGTON, D.C., AS IN MANY OTHER CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, THE CHANCE OF A FULL-SERVICE GROCERY STORE BEING NEARBY DEPENDS ON WHERE A PERSON LIVES. AND, AS RESEARCH HAS SHOWN, WHERE A PERSON LIVES IS HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON RACE AND CLASS.

What about corner stores? Liquor stores? Delis?

SUPERMARKETS, MODELING A TREND IN CONVENIENCE IN AMERICAN CONSUMERISM, IDEALLY MAKE GROCERY SHOPPING EASIER. FOR BLACK URBAN RESIDENTS, HOWEVER, THEY BECOME ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF INEQUITIES THAT SHAPE ACCESS TO A NUMBER OF RESOURCES.

What types of foods are considered healthy?

THE GARDEN REPRESENTED THEIR DETERMINATION AND DESIRE TO REMAIN WHERE THEY HAD PLANTED ROOTS.

How accessible is the alternative food movement?

IN THIS CONTEXT, "FEEDING THE COMMUNITY" TOOK ON GREATER MEANINGS THAN PROVIDING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. "FEEDING" MEANT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, VISIONS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND POTENTIALS FOR STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS. I EXPLAINED THE GARDEN AND PLANTING TO HIM WHERE IT CAME FROM, HOW HE CARED FOR IT, HOW IT BEHAVED INSIDE VERSUS OUTSIDE. PLANTS IN RECYCLED PLASTIC JUICE CONTAINERS, PLANTERS, AND SEEDS AND LEAVES IN RECYCLED JELLO CONTAINERS CROWDED THE SINGLE WINDOW IN THE LIVING ROOM. HE GREW VARIOUS PEPPERS, TOMATOES, LEMON TREES, ORANGE TREES, AND A PINE TREE IN HIS APARTMENT."





text visited



“In this time, we are acutely aware of the fractures in our system of runaway consumption and corporate insatiability. We feel the hot winds of wildfire, the disruptions of pandemic, and the choked breath of the victims of state violence. We know there is no going back to “normal.” The path forward demands that we take our rightful places as the younger siblings in creation, deferring to the oceans, forests, and mountains as our teachers. Those whose skin is the color of soil are reviving their ancestral and ancient practice of listening to the Earth to know which way to go.”

**“all beings are
sacred**

**there is a
covenant of
moderation**

**nature is
cooperative and
generous**

**nature is queer
and trans**

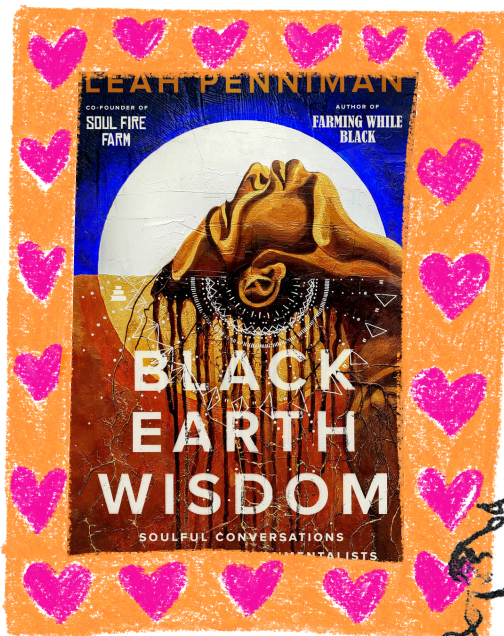
**nature does not
hate**

**our common
languages are
song and silence**

**land is the basis
of freedom**

we can't breathe

we are kin”



CONVERSATIONS WITH

Alice Walker • adrienne maree brown • Dr. Ross Gay • Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson •
Rue Mapp • Dr. Carolyn Finney • Audrey Peterman • Awise Agbaye Wande Abimbola • Kendra
Pierre Louis • Latria Graham • Awo Enroue Onigbonna Sangofemi Halfkenny • Dr. Lauret Savoy •
Ibrahim Abdul-Matin • Savi Horne • Dr. Claudia Ford • Dr. J. Drew Lanham • Dr. Leni Sorensen •
Queen Quet • Toshi Reagon • Yeye Luisah Teish • Yonnette Fleming • Naima Penniman • Angelou
Ezeilo • James Edward Mills • Teresa Baker • Ira Wallace • Pandora Thomas • Toi Scott • Aleya
Fraser • Chris Bolden-Newsome • Savonella Horne Esq • Dr. Joshua Bennett • B. Anderson • Chris
Hill • Greg Watson • T. Morgan Dixon • Dr. Dorceta Taylor • Colette Pichon Battle Esq • Dillon
Bernard • Sharon Lavigne • Steve Curwood

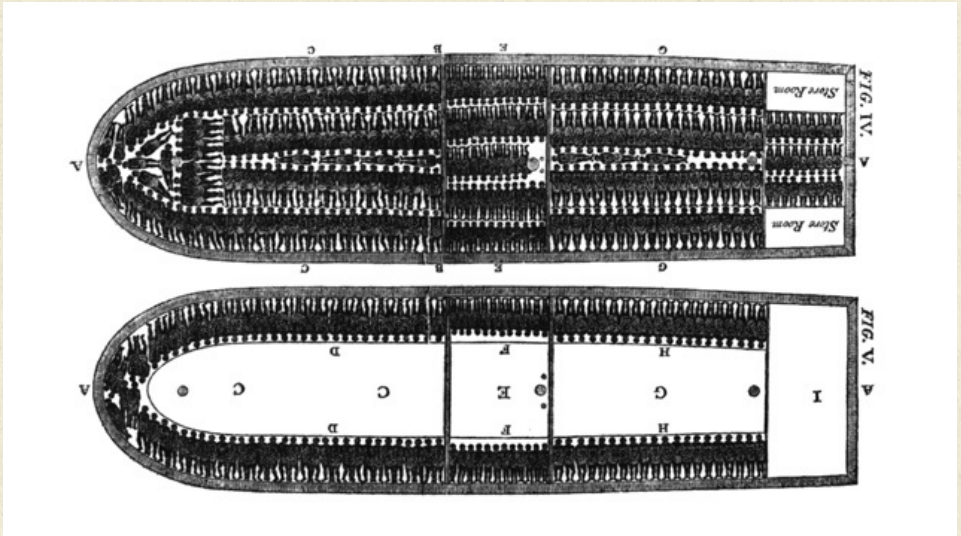
HOMAGE TO OUR EARTH-LISTENING ELDERS

BANTU WATER SPIRIT WORSHIPPERS
WEST AFRICAN SACRED GROVE PROTECTORS
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN ORIGINATORS OF CROP ROTATION
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN ORIGINATORS OF POLYCULTURE
BANTU TERRACE AND MOUND BUILDERS
THOSE WHO GREEN THE SAHEL DESERTS
AFRICAN WOMEN COMPOSTERS
GRANDMOTHERS WHO BRAIDED SEEDS
CESAR AND ENSLAVED AFRICAN HERBALISTS
GULLAH JACK AND OTHER ENSLAVED CONJURERS
AUNT CLARA DAVIS
GREAT DISMAL SWAMP MAROONS
BRISTER FREEMAN AND ZILPAH WHITE
PHILLIS WHEATLEY
JOHN EDMONSTONE
YORK
HARRIET JACOBS
HARRIET TUBMAN
SOLOMON BROWN
FREE SOIL MOVEMENT
ALBERY WHITMAN
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER
CHARLES YOUNG AND THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS
CHARLES HENRY TURNER
WILLIAM EDWARD BURGHARDT (W.E.B.) DU BOIS
ZORA NEALE HURSTON
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN
LANCELOT JONES
HATTIE CARTHAN
EUGENE WILLIAMS
NEGRO 4H WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CONFERENCES
NATURE STUDY MOVEMENT
DR. BOOKER T. WHATLEY
FANNIE LOU HAMER
BETTY REID SOSKIN
TONI MORRISON
HENRY DUMAS
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS
HAZEL JOHNSON
MAVYNNE "BEACH LADY" BETSC
ABRAHAM LINCOLN LEWIS
LUCILLE CLIFTON
JAYNE CORTEZ
DR. WANGARI MAATHAI
KEN SARO WIMA
WADERS AT HAULOVER BEACH PARK
BOB MARLEY
JOHN FRANCIS, PLANETWALKER
ROBERT BULLARD
OCTAVIA BUTLER
SHIRLEY & CHARLES SHERRÖD
NEW COMMUNITIES LAND TRUST
BENJAMIN CHAVI
DOLLIE BURWELL
BROTHER YUSUF BURGESS
DANA ALSTON

“Our ancestors and elders helped develop regenerative farming, practiced herbal medicine, advanced the field of ornithology and entomology, demanded access to land and ecological services, administered national parks, catalyzed the environmental justice movement, and more.”

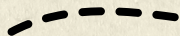
3. Historical Analysis

A Tale of the United States: Race, Land, Capitalism



According to estimates from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, 12.5 million Africans were brutally ripped from their land and transported to the New World. Around 10.7 million Africans survived the Middle Passage, disembarking in North America, the Caribbeans, South America, and Europe.

The enslavers treated Africans as property, inflicting upon them physical and sexual violence, tearing apart families, and suppressing cultural identities in order to compel them to work. In the United States, legalized chattel slavery forced generations after generations, millions of Africans to work on sugar, tobacco, cotton, and coffee plantations in addition to the white settlers' homes. Since the inception of the United States, unfathomable violence has tied race, land, and capitalism together.



In VT,

While Vermont is the first colony to abolish slavery in its 1777 Constitution, slavery still lingered within the state for another 30 years. Scholarship from Kevin J. Graffagnino, Elise A. Guyette, John M. Lovejoy, Harvey Amani Whitfield, Jane Williamson, and Robert M. Vanderbeck paint a more colorful picture of what life might have been like in these lands that we now know as Vermont.

From their research, we learn that early Vermonters's enslaved population consisted of primarily Indigenous populations and imported Africans. Even the 1777 Constitution, which Vermonters tout as being the most emancipatory of its kind, created conditions that permitted child slave labor to persist. Due to the vague enforcement of this decree, slave holders would often forge documents that betrayed the accuracy of a person's age. Laws such as the 1779 Ordering and Disposing of Transient Persons Act, 1779 Maintaining and Supporting the Poor Act, 1786 Sale and Transportation Act, 1806 Prevention of Kidnapping Act, show that while *de facto* slavery was on the decline, *de jure* slavery indentured young people of color and incarcerated poor adults of color into coercive bondage nonetheless.

"Therefore, no male person, born in this country, or brought from over sea, ought to be holden by law, to serve any person, as a servant, slave, or apprentice, after he arrives to the age of twenty-one years; nor female, in like manner, after she arrives to the age of eighteen years, unless they are bound by their own consent, after they arrive to such age, or bound by law for the payment of debts, damages, fines, costs, or the like." ~ 1777 Constitution

The famous 1777 Constitution also created a new class-- Free Black Vermonters-- before Vermonters, much less the rest of the country knew what to do with itself. As these free Black Americans waded through ambiguous definitions of personhood, statehood, and nationhood, they nevertheless led complex and yet humanly simple lives-- starting families, participating in the local economy, and fulfilling their hopes and dreams. Some left detailed testimonies of their lives in the Northeast, and others are remembered in the town plan, land deeds, tombstone markers, wills, and census records, with which we can only begin to guess at how they lived.



In VT,

Elise A. Guyette's *Discovering Black Vermont* pieces together the story of three generations of free Black Americans who built their life on a hill in Hinesburgh, Vermont. In doing so, she traces the life and lineage of these pioneers in order to reconstruct the Vermonter myth, that the ones who "conquered the wilderness and built the state's democratic institutions were white."

Not only did white Vermonters hold slaves, enslaved and free African Americans made up a significant portion of the Vermont landscape. So much so, you'll be shocked to find that the most recent census shows that in certain areas, there were more Black people in Vermont in 1790 than there are now in 2024.

"For most of Vermont's early history, larger percentages of Blacks lived in white households than headed their own. For instance, in 1790, whites headed 83% of Vermont households that contained any black people. That leaves only 17% of households containing people of color being headed by a free Black man or woman. For all the years of this study, whites controlled between 50% and 83% of households that included Blacks. In 1820, when age information is supplied for the first time for people of color, we discover that Black servants were generally fourteen years old or over, but one-third were children thirteen years old or under. Two-thirds of these young servants were girls. In 1830, one-fifth of Vermont's Black servants were nine years old or under, two-thirds of them girls."

"In 1790, Vergennes was 7% Black and Ferrisburgh 2.5%; in 1800, Braintree was almost 3.8% Black, and in 1810, Windsor was 3.6% people of color. By 1820, Burlington was 3.4% free people of color and Hinesburgh almost 2%."

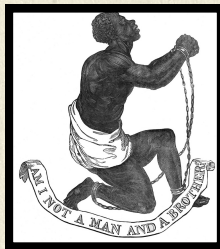
Early documents reflect the racist attitudes in American law in reducing Black Vermonters to numbers upon a ledger, or their names, if any, scattered throughout probate documents. The violence of the archives in erasing the humanity of Black Vermonters, notwithstanding, documentation is further complicated when generations removed, families would pass as white in order to achieve social and economic mobility.

We must actively push back against the popular conception of Vermont as a white space. This myth erases the multitude of Black stories told here in this beautiful state and delegitimizes the need to create liberatory geography everywhere.



The mechanization of the textile industry and the invention of the Cotton Gin in 1793 expanded the need for African laborers to farm cotton in unprecedented quantities. Enslaved labor made white settlers

Enslaved labor made white settlers extremely wealthy. Although slavery was mostly contained in the South through agricultural labor, the Northern businessmen benefited economically from the trading of cash crops internationally and all the raw materials that went towards the American economy.



Largest African American Communities in Britain					
	percentage of African Americans		percentage of African Americans		percentage of population
	London	Other	London	Other	Other
Town					
Birmingham	20	8	Birmingham	71	2.4
London	14	7.7	London	29	2.1
Cardiff	14	6.6	Wolverhampton	39	1.4
Sheffield	13	5.5	Sheffield	35	1.3
Nottingham	13	5.5	Nottingham	35	1.3
Area					
England	47	5.4	England	33	1.3
Wales	47	5.4	Wales	43	1.3
Scotland	47	5.4	Scotland	43	1.3
London	47	5.4	London	43	1.3
Area					
Cardiff	48	2.9	Cardiff	67	0.5
Wolverhampton	48	2.9	Wolverhampton	67	0.5
Sheffield	48	2.9	Sheffield	67	0.5
Nottingham	48	2.9	Nottingham	67	0.5
London	48	2.9	London	67	0.5
Wolverhampton	48	2.9	Wolverhampton	67	0.5
Sheffield	48	2.9	Sheffield	67	0.5
Nottingham	48	2.9	Nottingham	67	0.5
London	48	2.9	London	67	0.5



From the 1830s to the 1860s, the abolitionist movement gained momentum. Freed Africans spoke candidly about their experiences and organized networks for other slaves to escape. As Enlightenment ideals begin to spread, it was becoming abundantly clear that American law was hypocritical and in dire need of reform to align with its professed principles of liberty and equality.

1. GEN. WILLIAM T. SHERMAN'S SPECIAL FIELD ORDER 15

As the Civil War was winding down, Union leaders gathered a group of 20 black leaders in Savannah, Georgia with the goal to set up a plan for thousands of newly freed men in January, 1865. When asked what would help his community, Garrison Frazier advocated for land:

"The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor ... and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare."

Thus became the Special Field Order 15, promising the freed slaves "40 acres and a mule" from confiscated Confederate land. This order was rescinded in the fall of 1865. However short-lived, this order marks a historical legal framework for reparations and provides a glimpse into the importance of land ownership.

In VT,

Guyette cites in *Discovering Black Vermont* many accounts from Vermonters and other New Englanders alike of how life used to be like.

Positive and negative testimonies abound. A piece by Edward S. Aaby, an English traveler in 1833, recorded that Northern Black Americans would “sit down to the same table as the whites” and that “their services are more wanted in the country than in the towns” to which Guyette backs with the 1860 Vermont census that shows “an almost equal percentage Blacks and whites employed as farm laborers.” Other reports provide conflicts that are nestled within larger racial and class hierarchies.

Discovering Black Vermont delves into the history of The Peterses and Clarks, two families that lived on (what they renamed after the war as) Lincoln Hill. Guyette writes that “the women, joined rural networks of both blacks and whites, and the men voted in town and state elections and fought in our country’s wars.” The two families owned both land and properties, and made money off of farming and working for their neighbours.

THE CLARK EXTENDED FAMILY, 1795–1870

TOP OF THE HILL

Shubael CLARK (c1770 – 1834)
Vilette BASSETT (1775 – 1863)

Nine children born in Vermont:
*Almira (m. William Langley)
Sybil (m. Jeremiah Loudon)
*Phoebe (m. Edward Williams)
*Harriet (m. Edward Williams)
*Hiram (never marries)
Rachel (m. Edward Queen)
Minerva (m. Mr. Harrison)
*Charles (m. Maria)
*Lewis (m. Ruth Brown)

TOP and MIDDLE OF THE HILL

Lewis CLARK (c1898 – 1876)
Ruth BROWN (c1796 – 1860s)

4 children born on the Hill:
Sybil
Caroline
Mary
Alonzo

TOP OF THE HILL

Almira CLARK (1797 – 1850)
William LANGLEY (1794 – 1876)

Both born in Vermont.
Seven children born in Vermont:
*Lewis (m. Pamela Storm)
*Henry (m. Elvina)
*Newell (m. Harriet Butler)
*Loudon (m. Jane Anthony)
Jane (m. Mr. Green)
Mitchell (m. Louisa)
*Jeremiah

TOP OF THE HILL

Phoebe CLARK (1820 – 1845)
Edward WILLIAMS (c1813 – 1877)

2 children born on the Hill:
*Rachel (m. Aaron Freeman)
George (m. Nettie Anthony)
m. Harriet Clark

* Lived on the Hill after marriage with their own children, at least for a while; some for the rest of their lives.

THE PETERS EXTENDED FAMILY, 1798–1870

BOTTOM OF THE HILL

Josephus PETERS (1802 – 1869)
Charlot BETTIS (1804 – 1850)

Five sons:
*Henry
*George
*John
*Joseph
*Cornelius

m. Amy PRINCE
m. Sarah Jane FREEMAN
Two children:
Clara
Unknown

BOTTOM OF THE HILL

Sarah PETERS (c1807 – 1880s)
Charles EDWARDS (c1804 – 1880s)

3 children:
*Warren
*William
*Henry

BOTTOM OF THE HILL

Prince PETERS (1759 – 1832)
Hannah LENSEMEN (d. by 1820)

Four children:
Samuel 2nd
*Josephus (m. Charlot)
*Sarah (m. Charles Edwards)
Electa

m. Eliza (d. by 1840)

Samuel PETERS 1st (unknown relationship)
d. by 1840
Perhaps Prince’s brother
Samuel may have had a daughter,
Calista.

BOTTOM OF THE HILL

Calista PETERS (1806 – 1870s)
(Perhaps a daughter of Samuel, 1st)
Charles WATERS (1805–late 1860s)

2 children:
Charles
Samuel

* Lived on the Hill after marriage with their own children, at least for a while; some for the rest of their lives.

After the civil war, many newly freed men returned to the land to continue their livelihood. Despite discriminatory laws, sharecropping arrangements, and violence from white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, Black farmers owned 16 million acres nationwide, the all-time-high national average, in 1910.

In 1920, the USDA recorded that Black farm operators made up of 14% of all U.S. Farmers.



The Great Depression

In 1964, the USDA recorded that Black farm operators made up of 5.8% of all U.S. Farmers. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights investigates unlawful distribution of loans by the USDA after mass protests.

In 1982, the USDA recorded that Black farm operators made up of 2% of all U.S. Farmers.

In 1997, the USDA recorded that Black farm operators made up of 0.9% of all U.S. Farmers.

2. PIGFORD V GLICKMAN

Across the nation, Black farmers protested that they were denied access to loans and subsidies provided by the government. On a national level, farm subsidies that were afforded to white farmers were not afforded to Black farmers. Since they were denied government loans, emergency or disaster assistance, and other aid, many Black farmers lost their farms and their homes.

On April 14, 1999, Judge Paul L. Friedman of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia approved a settlement agreement and consent decree in *Pigford v. Glickman*, a class action discrimination suit between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and black farmers. The suit claimed that the agency had discriminated against Black farmers on the basis of race and failed to investigate or properly respond to complaints. *Pigford v. Glickman* settled for approximately \$1 billion dollars. Most farmers received about \$50,000.

The deadline for submitting a claim was September 12, 2000. 69% (Track A) and 62% (Track B) of the 22,721 eligible class members had final adjudications approved.

The Obama Administration issued an additional \$1.25 billion payment in The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation case, also known as the Pigford II case in 2010. The case sought to resolve the widespread conclusion that many Black farmers were left out of the first case. According to Environmental Working Group's research, no Vermont Black Farmers sought entry under court-mandated extension.

The international Black Lives Matter movement in 2013 brought about a renewed awareness of the racial inequality and discrimination experienced by Black people in the United States and abroad. "Black Farmers Matter" is developed to celebrate the importance of Black people in land work. Farmers of color, and Black Farmers in particular, continue to organize amongst themselves and with other activists to advocate for equal access to land.





In the United States and abroad, the ideology white settlers propagated to ensure and justify their domination over other non-white populations and their land still influence every way we move through the world.

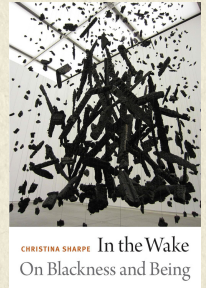
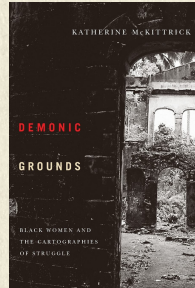
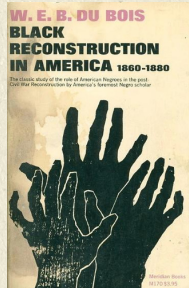
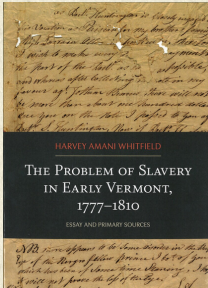
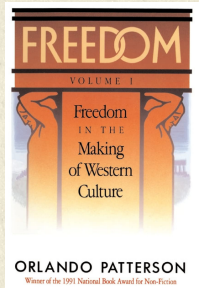
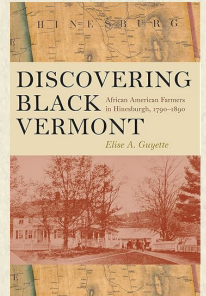
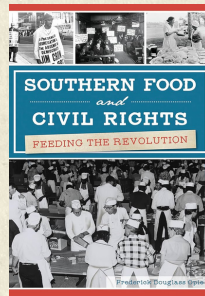
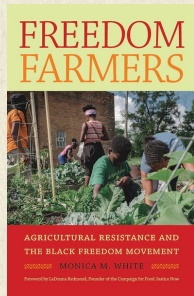
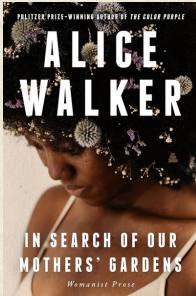
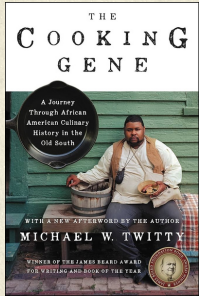
Red-lining and carceral configurations are amplified globally through colonization and imperialism, resulting in devastating diaspora, environmental injustice, food apartheid, and in many cases, genocide.

It is also important to note that when change is made, progress has been fought for by people of color and for people of color by disrupting the status quo. From Flint, Michigan to Cancer Valley in Mississippi, the Congo to Palestine, we also see unprecedented land worker-led movements, Global South solidarity, Pan-African mobilization, and coalitions of care being built with the people and land in mind.

Borrowing words from the Middlebury Land Acknowledgment, we must understand how we all fit together in this "sacred web of life that connects people, animals, plants, air, water, and Earth."

A RESOURCE GUIDE

BOOKS



PAPERS

Richard M. Balzano, Informants and Artifacts: Local Histories' Representations of Bondage and the Precarious States of Freedom in Northeastern Vermont

Colin G. Calloway, Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England

Saidiya Hartman, The Venus in Two Acts

Camilla Hawthorne, Black Matters are Spatial matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-First Century

Katherine McKittrick, Black Geographies and the Politics of Place

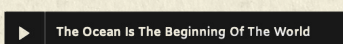
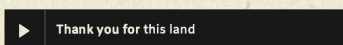
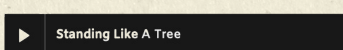
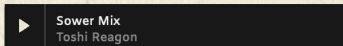
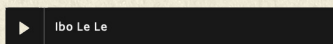
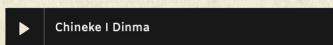
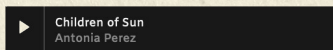
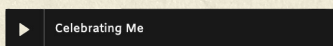
Rashad Shabazz, Black Spatial Imaginaries: Art, Activism, and the Reimagining of Urban Landscapes

Clyde Woods, Theorizing Black Geographies

Robert M. Vanderbeck, Vermont and the Imaginative Geographies of American Whiteness

MUSIC

Playlist from Farming While Black
[farmingwhileblack.org/songs-from-the-book]



PODCASTS



Hosted by
Nikole Hannah-Jones



Hosted by
Deb Freeman

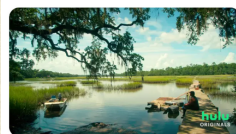


Hosted by
Colah B Tawkin



Hosted by
Sukari Bowman

DOCUMENTARIES



EPISODE 4
The Gullah Way
The Gullah Geechee people of South Carolina are fighting to preserve the traditions passed down from their ancestors, West Africans forced into slavery. Padma catches and cracks cra...



EPISODE 5
Fufu for the Win
Padma's spice meter is put to the test by comedian Yvonne Orji and others when she travels to Houston, home to the largest Nigerian population in the US, where she gets an insider...

4. Contemporary Landscape

Last week, the USDA released the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, 5 years after the 2017 Census of Agriculture previously cited in this zine. The census shows an overall decrease in farmers of color nationwide, with a 7.9% decrease in Black owned farms. Despite the decrease in farms, the Black farms were able to expand and increase 13.9% in Black owned farm land.

Those general trends aren't necessarily reflected in our state. In Vermont in 2017, the census reports 17 Black owned farms, a total of 17 Black farmers, and 3,960 acres of Black owned land. In Vermont in 2022, the census reports 18 Black owned farms, a total of 21 Black farmers, and 3,152 acres of Black owned land. While the number of Black farms and farmers have increased in our state, the total amount of land owned decreased a whopping 20.4%.

Table 61. Selected Farm Characteristics by Race: 2022 and 2017

[Data were collected for a maximum of four producers per farm. For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text.]

Characteristics	Black or African American only		White only	
	2022	2017	2022	2017
FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS				
Farmsnumber	18	17	6,493	6,773
Land in farmsacres	3,152	3,960	1,161,553	1,185,550
FARMS BY SIZE				
1 to 9 acres	7	4	807	873
10 to 49 acres	3	6	1,874	1,915
50 to 179 acres	3	2	2,083	2,175
180 to 499 acres	3	2	1,273	1,339
500 acres or more	2	3	456	471
OWNED AND RENTED LAND IN FARMS				
Owned land in farmsfarms	14	13	6,169	6,382
.....acres	1,530	3,005	944,704	935,709
Rented or leased land in farmsfarms	5	8	1,708	2,203
.....acres	1,622	955	216,849	249,841
TENURE				
Full ownersfarms	13	9	4,785	4,570
.....(D) acres	1	455	564,116	502,886
Part ownersfarms	(D)	4	1,384	1,812
.....(D) acres	4	3,500	570,139	648,988
Tenantsfarms	1,602	4	324	391
.....acres		5	27,298	33,676
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD AND GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS				
Totalfarms	18	17		
.....\$1,000	1,576	1,483	6,493	6,773
Market value of agricultural products soldfarms	18	17		
.....\$1,000	1,576	(D)	1,036,344	778,886
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse cropsfarms	14	9	6,493	6,773
.....\$1,000	1,495	(D)	1,027,809	778,886
Livestock, poultry, and their productsfarms	9	13	4,291	4,401
.....\$1,000	80	944	323,778	186,409
Government paymentsfarms	-	2	2,744	3,356
.....\$1,000		(D)	704,031	592,477
			970	677
			8,534	5,641
FARMS BY ECONOMIC CLASS				

Black Vermont Farms

CALABASH GARDENS

✧ CLEMMONS FAMILY

FARM ✧ CONSCIOUS

HOMESTEAD ✧ FARMER

JAMES APICULTURE ✧

FLYING BUFFALO FARM

✧ HIGH PRIESTESS ✧

JANINE FARM ✧ KALCHE

WINE ✧ KHELCOM FARM

✧ MR. Z CRAFT CANNABIS

✧ SOWING ROOTS FARM

✧ STRAFFORD ORGANIC

CREAMERY ✧ MAMA FARM

✧ SUSU COMMUNITY FARM

✧ ZAFA WINE ✧ ZENBARN

FARMS ✧ ZION GROWERS

Masrur Chowdhury

Calabash Gardens

Who: Claudel Chery + Jette Mandl- Abramson

What: 2 acres of saffron + cover crops

Where: Newbury, Vermont

When: Calabash Gardens began late summer of 2018 with 2000 *Crocus Sativus* corms

How: regenerative organic farming techniques

THE VISION:

Calabash is an evergreen tropical American tree which bears fruit in the form of large woody gourds. The hope is that, like the calabash tree, Calabash Garden will serve as a gathering place for people to connect, share stories, and build relationships. .

find them at:

ig: @calabashgardens
Norwich Farmers Market
calabashgardens.com

fine dining experiences,
saffron, tinctures, maple syrup,
hot sauce, + more



CLEMMONS FAMILY FARM

"We must love each other and support each other.
We have nothing to lose but our chains."
- Assata Shakur



- (1) **PRESERVE** the 138-acre historic Clemmons farm in Vermont as a critical educational prototype, and a model for preserving other African-American owned agricultural land, cultural and heritage assets in the U.S. The farm is one of the 0.4% of farms in the US that remain African-American owned; land is **EQUITY**;
- (2) **EMPOWER** a growing network of Vermont's Black artists and culture bearers with opportunities for professional development, advocacy, visibility, networking, paid engagements, collective healing, and a safe haven for creativity that helps them to thrive;
- (3) **BUILD** a loving multicultural community around African-American/African diaspora history, arts and culture.

CONSCIOUS HOMESTEAD

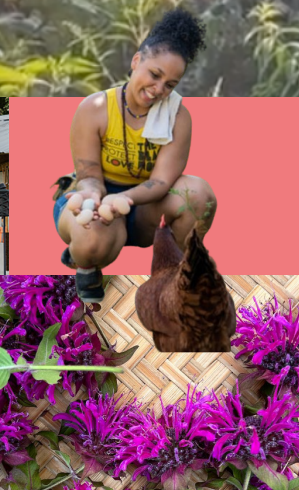
WE ARE A LEARNING URBAN HOMESTEAD THAT
CENTERS BLACK & BROWN LAND-BASED HEALING &
LIBERATION, COMMUNITY CARE AND THE PRACTICE
OF LIVING CONSCIOUSLY WITH, NOT OVER, THE
LAND OR ONE ANOTHER.



WINDOSKI, VT

ARE YOU READY TO LIVE
IN YOUR WHOLENESS?

Dreaming Outloud Sans



WE ARE CHOOSING TO LOVE OURSELVES UNCONDITIONALLY

Ezili's Respite Farm & Sanctuary

is an intergenerational diversified working farm and homestead on 13.4 acres, cultivating perennial food sources, medicinal herbs, chickens, and goats. our mission is to feed the growth and resilience of rural Black and Transgender community through Afro-ecological and permaculture practices.

In addition to Harm Reduction Heroes(c) peer-mentorship programs, hunting & foraging, responsibilities include cultivating perennial & medicinal food sources, raising heritage breed chickens, guineas, and small ruminants.

stewards@ezilis-respite.org
Upper Valley of Vermont



FARMER JAMES APICULTURE

003



“We work with selected Breeding Stocks of Honeybees that have traits to Survive in the Green Mountains of Vermont. We try and set up our Apiaries in areas that provide an abundance of wild native species of plant Flora and Fauna. Believing that Mother Nature provides them with what they know is needed to form a Strong and Healthy Bee Population. We think this is Apiculture.”



Farmerjamesapiculture.com
Insta: @farmerjamesapiculturevt
Harvesting in Stockbridge, VT

Brys Peralta Grant

James Key's interest in beekeeping grew out of the desire to find a solution to the absence of bees around his garden.

In 2017 he locked in on this quest, began taking classes, and became a member of the Vermont Beekeepers Association by 2018.

In 2020 he became Vermont's first African-American Certified Beekeeper,



WE PRACTICE NATURAL BEE KEEPING METHODS

ALL NATURAL HONEY. WE SUPPORT POLLINATORS

FARMER JAMES

CLOVER

DANDELION

ASTER

GOLDENROD

BLACKBERRY

FARMER JAMES

FARMER JAMES APICULTURE

JAMES T. KEY, JR.
VERMONT CERTIFIED BEEKEEPER

Flying Buffalo Farm

mother + daughter duo



Hazel Adams-Shango

Hazel Adams

On Christmas morning of 2021, Hazel secured the land through Vermont Land Link and began planting by spring. The family-owned farm is a family project between Hazel Adams-Shango and her three children in their efforts to grow a AfroAgriTech movement focused on Health, Education, Agriculture, and Technology.

The Flying Buffalo LLC, located in Lamoille County, Vermont, which produces naturally grown vegetables, flowers, and medicinal herbs. She is currently sharing this life experience with her three adult children and grandson. The farm is totally off-grid and all seeds are non-GMO, Heirloom, and hand sown. Farming with her family is the latest adventure Hazel has chosen to engage in.

contact:

flyingbuffalovt@gmail.com

info@beingspecialnyc.com

Wolcott, VT



Marlow Saucier



"The High Priestess represents a deep connection to one's intuition and inner wisdom."

Located in Brattleboro Vermont, High Priestess is devoted to producing the highest caliber craft cannabis products utilizing regenerative farming principles. Our passion leads us in selecting the finest cultivars that deliver a truly exceptional cannabis experience. With a focus on sustainability and a deep respect for the plant, we believe that our approach to cultivation is not only better for the environment, but also produces a superior product that is second to none.

On a more personal level, our approach to this cannabis endeavor is one where our true north embodies social justice and authenticity with integrity. We support cannabis businesses that are interested in building an inclusive community and are helping to remove the negative stigma associated with cannabis.



Living soil is a method of soil cultivation that prioritizes the use of natural and organic materials to create a soil ecosystem that is alive with microorganisms. These microorganisms work together to break down organic matter and release nutrients, creating a healthy and sustainable environment for plant growth. The result is a soil that is rich in beneficial bacteria and fungi, which helps to produce high-quality crops with enhanced flavor, aroma, and potency.

Cleo Baldoumas

JANINE FARM

Janine Farm, run by Janine Ndagijimana in Colchester, Vermont, cultivates over **8 acres** of African eggplant and various specialty vegetables.

Janine sells her produce to customers nationwide and partners with the VT Food Bank.



Janine
Ndagijimana

The farm also plays a role in seed preservation: Janine saves and sells African eggplant seeds through True Love Seeds.



Follow her on
facebook or
call (802) 363-5461

**Incubated through New Farms for
New Americans**

Sophia Giliberto

KALCHE



Kathline

Chery
(she/her)
Director of
Production

Justine Belle Lambright
(they/them)
Director of External Business

Grace Meyer
(she/her)
Director of
Internal
Business



THE NEXT WORLD OF WINE™

looks like...

- *the decolonization of big wine
- *the dismantling of racism and sexism in the wine industry
- *the amplification of historically oppressed and abused voices
- *maximized resourcefulness and minimized waste
- *cooperative practices and a worker-designed economy

Website: kalcchewine.co

Contact: hi@kalcchewine.co

Instagram: [@kalcchewineco](https://www.instagram.com/kalcchewineco)

Fletcher, VT

Xiaoyuan Jiao

Khelcom Farm

The original Khelcom is an agricultural community with thousands of hectares of land outside the Holy City of Touba in Senegal. Khelcom was founded by Seringe Saliou, son of Serigne Touba. He believed strongly in hard work and simple living, as well as the virtues of spiritual and mental freedom.

Khelcom Farm, Vermont, was founded on the principle that education, hard work, and food sovereignty can liberate people and provide a better future.

*Farm Stand in Berlin, VT
Montpelier Farmers Market
Barre Farmers Market*

vegetables - herbs - eggs -
poultry - flowers - african goods
from Senegal

Website: khelcomfarm.com
Instagram: @khelcomfarm

khelcomfarm@gmail.com
802-222-7853

Address:
180 Highland Avenue
Berlin, Vermont 05641



*former kennel -->
3,000-square-foot
indoor cannabis
growing operation*



📍 Middlebury, Vermont

MR. Z CRAFT CANNABIS

<https://www.mrzcraft.com>

*“Mr. Z is a **collaboration between three lifelong friends** with a shared appreciation for cannabis and a dream. Our goal was to produce the highest quality indoor craft cannabis for the Vermont consumer—with a **commitment to sustainability, social justice, and the firm belief that cannabis will make the world a better place.**”*

// Maxim Eingorn, Ronald Williams, Zachary Tyson

At the forefront of indoor craft cannabis cultivation~
time-intensive, regenerative,
no-till living soil systems



*weaving together knowledge in
tech, design, and legal fields*



Camilo Gonzalez-Williamson

Sowing Roots Farm

8 Downs Road, Underhill, Vermont

Chittenden county

Established 2021



Poultry & Produce

Pasture-raised Chickens

Fresh Eggs

Kale * Tomatoes * Okra

Zucchini * Carrots * Sorrel

Parsley * Spinach * Garlic

Apples * Basil * Cherries

No GMOs, chemicals, antibiotics, or anything other than 100% natural inputs are used.

CSA

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

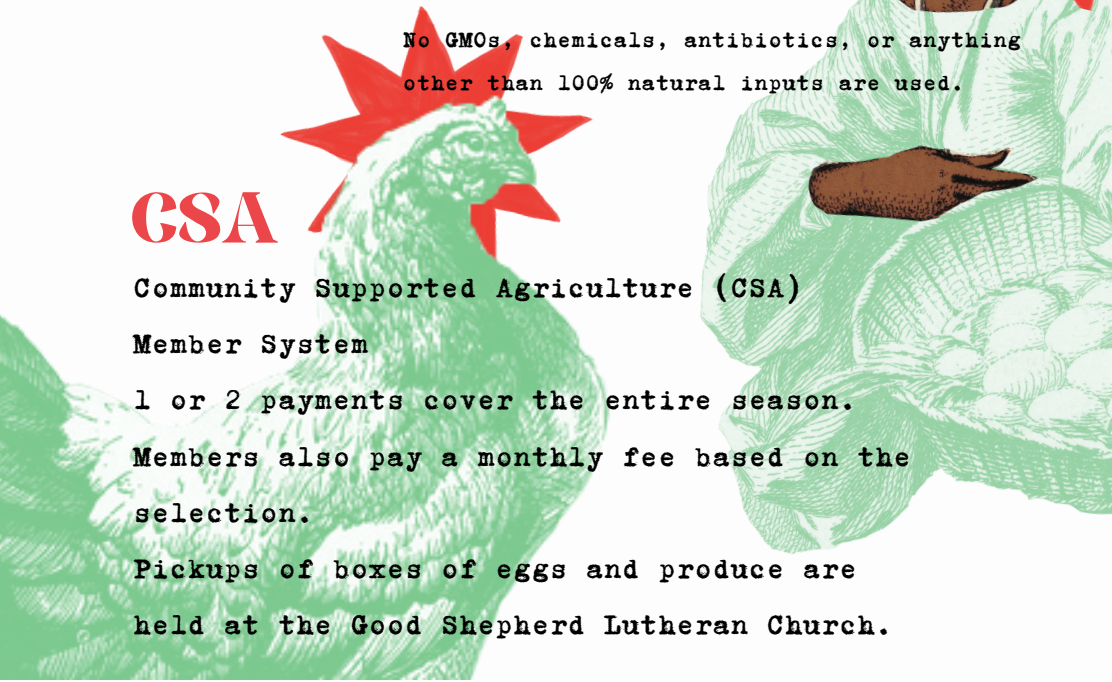
Member System

1 or 2 payments cover the entire season.

Members also pay a monthly fee based on the selection.

Pickups of boxes of eggs and produce are

held at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.



Sheila Camacho



Strafford organic creamery is family owned farm run by Earl and his wife Amy!

Earl continues his family's tradition of organic farming with a focus on cow care and producing high quality milk!



Everything that's done, from the crops they grow for the cows, to the gentle routines of milking, is focused on the comfort and well-being of the herd

Their farm is scaled beautifully to fit their land and community, and their attention to detail shows in their fabulous small-batch ice creams and pure, sweet milk.



**Earl Ransom and wife Amy
Huyffer**



MAMA FARM

THEOGÈNE AND HYACINTHE MATARO

resettled in Vermont in 2004 from Rwanda. They and their four children moved into the second farmhouse on the Pine Island property in 2014 and began raising goats, chickens, and vegetables. **Mama Farm** raises up to 1,000 chickens per year as allowed by Vermont law and processes them according to Vermont law.

802-829-7642



INCUBATED THROUGH PINE ISLAND
COMMUNITY GARDENS

SUSU Community Farm

embracing food as medicine



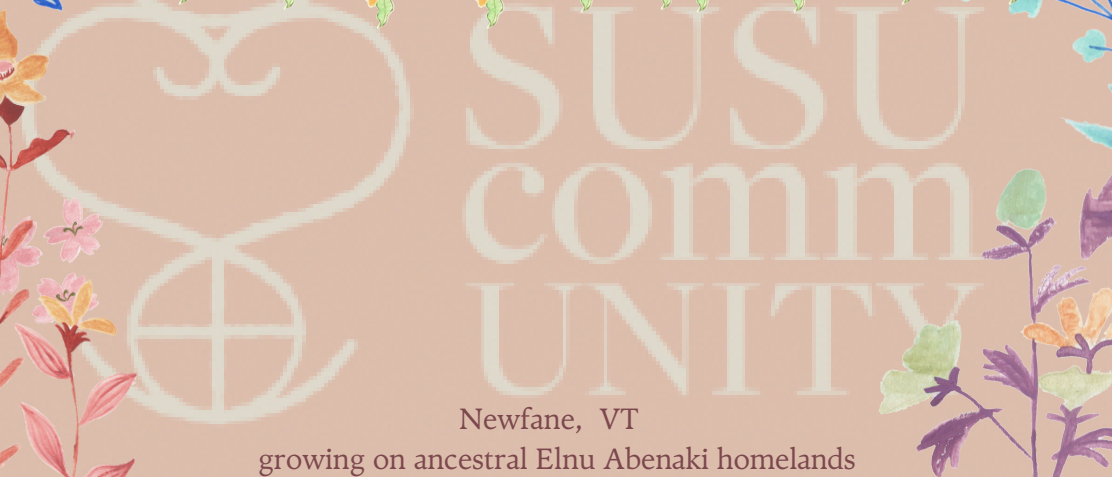
SUSU CommUNITY Farm

"we are an Afro-Indigenous stewarded farm, committed to centering food + land sovereignty through educational opportunities, land-based relationship, and ancestral healing"

-SUSU



"SOWING SEEDS OF LIBERATION IN VERMONT AND BEYOND"



Newfane, VT

growing on ancestral Elnu Abenaki homelands

ZAFA

COUNTERSPELL

Ivo Verzone



“JUST FUCKING FERMENTED JUICE”

THE FARM

Zafa wines is a NOFA certified Organic Vineyard & Farm on Isle La Motte.

The 56 acre farm specializes in natural sparkling wines, which founder Krista Scruggs describes as “just fucking fermented juice.”

After starting in 2018, Zafa has become a pioneer in the field of winemaking using traditional and native fermentation methods.

THE ETHOS

Diversity

Zafa is 100% woman-owned and 85% underrepresented employees

Equity

Competitive wages, benefits, and regenerative farming practices, prioritizing employees as the most valuable assets

Regeneration

Focus on rehabilitating and protecting resources without harmful practices, ensuring long-term land investment



“zafa is a powerful counterspell against *fukú*, the intergenerational curse of colonization”

ZENBARN FARMS



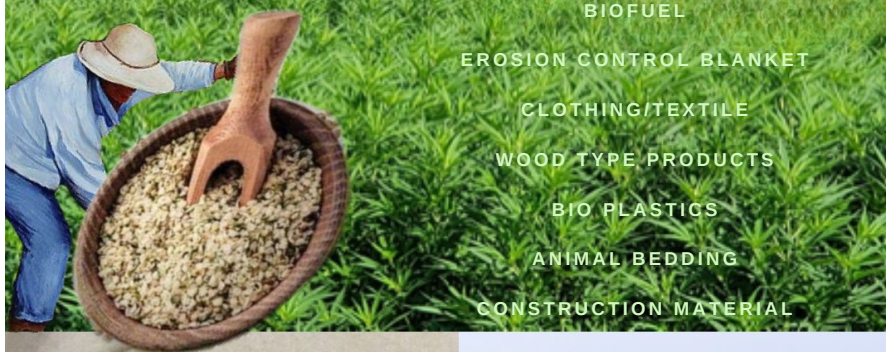
Based in Waterbury, VT, **Zenbarn Farms** began as a family run wellness studio providing yoga, mindfulness, and meditation classes. Zenbarn has since expanded to **nurture community** through live music performances in their event space and new farm-to-table restaurant—the first in Vermont to serve CBD infused foods and beverages. The farm practices **environmental sustainability** through the cultivation of outdoor cannabis and participates in **activism** through their partnership with the Pennywise Foundation's **Cannabis Equity Fund** which strives to support BIPOC folks to gain access to the cannabis industry.

web: zenbarnmj.com

instagram: [@zenbarnfarms](https://www.instagram.com/zenbarnfarms)

GROWING THE FUTURE

Developing the Industrial Hemp Marketplace for All.



BIOFUEL

EROSION CONTROL BLANKET

CLOTHING/TEXTILE

WOOD TYPE PRODUCTS

BIO PLASTICS

ANIMAL BEDDING

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL



After the 2019 CBD market crash, Brandon McFarlane and Travis Samuels (the owners) reimagined hemp's potential by focusing their Vermont facility on industrial hemp for fiber and seed.



ZION GROWERS

EST. 2015

Noemi Gutierrez



BIPOC Vermont Farming Networks

NEW FARMS FOR
NEW AMERICANS

✧ NORTHEAST

FARMERS OF
COLOR LAND

TRUST ✧ PINE

ISLAND

COMMUNITY

FARM ✧ RELEAF

COLLECTIVE

Andres Oyaga

New Farms for New Americans

The New Farms for New Americans gardening and agriculture program provides land access, education and opportunities for farmers to connect to the agricultural networks in Vermont. With long agrarian traditions including organic practices, food preservation, and seed saving, NFNA's farmers have so much to teach and share with the Vermont agricultural community. The program oversees two community gardens and ensures that all farmers have access to subsistence-size plots of land.

80 plots

65+ families who farm

serving refugees and
immigrants in
Winooski, VT
@New North End's
Ethan Allen Homestead

@new_farms_for_new_americans
www.aalv-vt.org/farms



Yohane Ntirundenga
from Burundi

Pius Sinzohagera
from Burundi

-eggplants
-habanero
-corn



A stylized pink flower with a dark center and yellow dots. The flower has five petals and a dark center. There are several yellow dots scattered around the flower. The background is white.

The core of NEFOC is our Network, an informal alliance of more than 600 Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian farmers and land stewards of color making our lives on land in New England and Upstate New York."

“Land in Indigenous,
Black, and Brown hands...
working together to
liberate the land, feed
our communities, and
uplift conservation of
more-than-human
beings!”



Pine Island Community Gardens

** collaborative farm collective

** for new American farmers

** sponsored by VT Land Trust

1029 Pine Island Rd.colchester, vermont

Raising local meat,
nurturing the fragile floodplain, &
connecting people to the land

Pine Island Community Farm is a project of the Vermont Land Trust. It supports New American farmers who wish to raise animals or garden crops. There are seven acres of community gardens at the farm. They are used by approximately **75+** families from **10** countries. Together, the business operations share the land, the barns, and the equipment.



Today, the Pine Island Community Gardens is home to two Independent Agricultural Enterprises--

The **Dhauralis from Bhutan's** Vermont Goat Collaborative and the **Mahoros from Rwanda's** Mama Farm. Raising goats and chicken respectively, they slaughter according to Islamic law and are able to service the growing Muslim communities in Vermont and Boston.



RELEAF: RACIAL EQUITY IN LAND, ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND FOOD

Breaking ground in Vermont as a network by and for Black, Indigenous, & People of Color advancing racial equity in land, environment, agriculture, & foodways

THE VERMONT RELEAF COLLECTIVE CULTIVATES CONNECTION, SHARES RESOURCES, AND AMPLIFIES THE VOICES OF PEOPLE OF COLOR IN VERMONT WITHIN OUR FOCUS AREAS OF LAND, ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND FOODWAYS. WE ARE A COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR GROWING POWER AND COMMUNITY FOR OUR MEMBERS.

CONNECTION:

COMMUNITY DINNERS, WORKSHOPS, SKILL SHARES, OUTDOOR ADVENTURES, RETREATS, ETC

RESOURCES:

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, EMAIL LISTSERV WITH CIRCULATION OF JOBS, INTERNSHIPS, GRANTS, LAND ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS, EVENTS, EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

AMPLIFIES:

ADVOCACY OF BIPOC INVOLVED IN THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS TO COMMUNITY AND STATEWIDE ENTITIES

"Every moment is an organizing opportunity, every person a potential activist, every minute a chance to change the world."

— Dolores Huerta

vtreleafcollective.org ☆ [@vtreleafcollective](https://twitter.com/vtreleafcollective) ☆ hello@vtreleafcollective.org



5. Farmer Dinner Series

Throughout the month of January, I extended the invitation to four farmers to visit Middlebury College for a series of Farmer Dinners. Farmers were invited to give a brief presentation on their farm and what they do, after which, we opened it up to Q&A, before lastly, transitioning to a more general conversation.

Some questions that came up during our time together include..

- What does farming mean to you?
- What are your favorite crops?
- Why did you name your farm ___?
- Can you describe a typical day in your life?
- What does your farm look, smell, sound, and feel like?
- How has your experiences been farming in Vermont?
- How was the process of acquiring land?
- How does seasonality play into farming?
- What agricultural practices do you employ on your farm? Why?
- What traditions do you arise from?
- What business model do you use to finance your work?
- How would you describe an experience where you felt seen in your work?
- What are the different lives you've lived before becoming a farmer?
- What's your advice for young people looking to farm?



Farmer Dinner Series

SUSU COMMUNITY FARM

Amber

Page 2

The revolution will be communal...in VT



- **Localized centers for food and food culture**
 - Communal recreational hoop houses community can grow food in them and relax in hammocks, chairs and tables; ALL community should be centered in these spaces and have agency
 - Outdoor boxframe dehydrators (processing food in communal spaces)
 - Stone soup cauldron (resources needed to grow & eat in public)
 - Town resources being put into something that is accessible and provides the means for people to teach, learn, practice, making their own food, preserving their own food, processing their own food, eating together
 - Community center that's really centered around food
 - Using empty buildings for town kitchens, town food processing centers and cafeterias
 - Communally sustained everyone eats that doesn't rely on millions of dollars of federal funding
 - Designing landscapes that are self sustaining, using materials, amendments, fertilizers that are made by organic matter in the environment



Amber Arnold and Jabari Saeed Jones

Exploring Creative Strategies for Food Liberation in Vermont:
Keynote Address by Amber Arnold and Jabari Saeed Jones of
SUSU COMMUNITY Farm

Box of Resilience
Youth to Liberation Pipeline
Storyteller Gardens
Trauma Conscious Liberation

1/11 5-7PM
Hillcrest

Farmer Dinner Series

KHELCOM FARM

Abdoulaye Zaal



How does farming
intersect with
spirituality for you?

1/19 5-7PM
Innovation Hub

Farmer Dinner Series

CALABASH GAREDENS

Jette



Zaka

Elianne

How has your relationship
with art changed since
you've become farmers?



1/25 5-7PM
Innovation Hub

Farmer Dinner Series

FLYING BUFFALO FARM

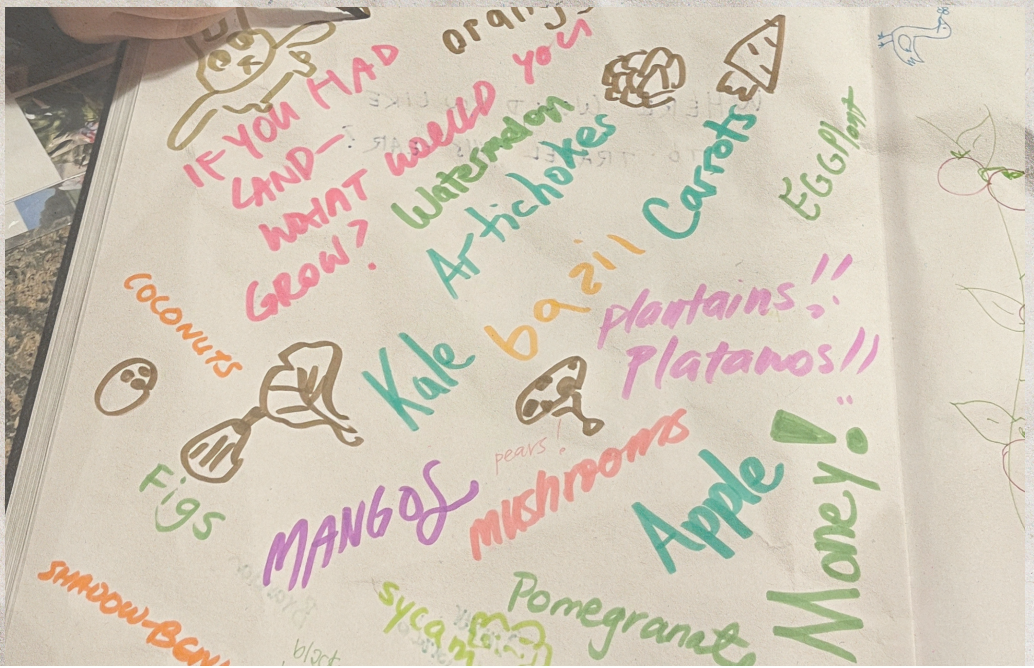


Hazel

"Grow where you go, go where you grow."

2/2 5-7PM
Innovation Hub

- SUSU Community Farm was cofounded by Amber and Naomi. The name SUSU pays homage to sou-sou, the West African word for a money-lending circle. Their work is informed by Black Liberation traditions, and is focused on reconnecting with the wisdom and knowledge present in their ancestral heritage to the now.
- At Khelcom Farm, the family farms with a purpose of providing food for the community. We learned that Abdoulaye's favorite time of day is when he's cruising up and down his field. Abdoulaye worked as a precision machinist manufacturing airplane tools, aerospace parts, and medical devices before becoming a farmer. He completed the UVM Farmer Training Program in 2021, a six month immersive and hands-on course in sustainable agriculture and food systems in Burlington, VT, and since then, has created Khelcom Farm. This winter, Khelcom Farm has applied to become certified organic. The documentation and accounting is done by Marja, Abdoulaye's partner, who is a flight nurse at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. They engage in social justice so that their children can grow up in a beautiful and safe place. They love meeting new people and hearing their stories. Abdoulaye shared with us some experiences at the Montpelier farmer's market that demonstrated not only the power of education around food, but also the ripple effect of being vocal about your needs and experiences. We went around sharing moments we've spent outdoors in nature that connect with spirituality and our own relationship with farming and food. Abdoulaye and Zaal ended our time together with a prayer...
- Zaka is a filmmaker, and Jette is a ceramicist. Since farming, they've both appreciated slowing down and really enjoying the creative process. Zaka and Jette chose saffron due to its interesting life cycle and, of course, its lucrativeness. Saffron has a long growing season and short harvesting time, and the hope is that, in a few years, they can travel the world and have the farm be self-sufficient. They both have been enjoying experimenting and learning about this crop that is typically grown in the Middle East. They want to travel the world, to Iran, India, Greece, Morocco, Spain, Turkey, Pakistan, China, Japan, and all the different places saffron is grown around the world. Zaka's nickname comes from the spirit of the harvest in Haitian Vodou. They want to teach their community all the amazing ways saffron can be used, as medicine, and as food. They are testing different types of crop crops to ward off weeds. We talked together about the difference between farming and gardening, one being able to feed others, and the other to feed oneself. Jette advises us all to learn about our food and the people growing them...
- Hazel started the farm as a family legacy project for her and her children. Hazel and her daughter (also named Hazel) completed the Hartshorn Farm's Farm Immersion Program in Waitsfield and then the Farm Beginnings program with NOFA-VT. The name of their farm, The Flying Buffalo LLC, originated from the family's love of buffalo chicken wings. Thus, the name also felt especially appropriate because the land where their farm is located is near the Buffalo Mountains. The Adams-Shango family doesn't farm for profit. Hazel has lived in Chicago, New York and Washington, DC before relocating to Vermont to join her children, and has lived multiple lives in various professions before adding "farmer" to the mix. They work to provide healthy food to The Bronx. Hazel's philosophy to combatting discrimination in Vermont is that we all have to eat! In doing so, use the act of growing food as an avenue for change. She shared with us many interesting fun facts about leasing land, water management, and how food can be used as a meeting place to the greater Vermont. In the Winter, Hazel returns to the farm on weekends to envision what their Spring Grow will look like as they begin their season.



6. Methodology



Crystal Zhou

They/She 2023.5

Black Studies Major
Classical Languages
Minor

I've always loved the Earth. In high school, I lectured anyone who would listen about carbon footprints, dedicated my Girl Scouts gold award to learning about water recycling in airports, and even started a campus wide composting club. But the more I learned about the world, the more my climate anxiety heightened. As a young person inheriting the world's toughest problems, pretending like there is no point in trying was easier than trying to fix everything. The Knoll arrived in my life around the same time Black Studies found me. I was burnt out and pessimistic, paralyzed by all the doomsaying statistics, theories, and news I was consuming.

In my summer internship with the Middlebury College Organic Garden, lovingly known as the Knoll, I can spend 2 hours weeding a field and get up feeling the tangible difference of preparing the beds for another rotation of crops. I bore witness to the way in which every drop of water I hauled from the kale washing station down to the edge of the garden nourished the sweetgrass growing along the row. I felt in my bones how a to-do list too daunting to tackle, many hands make light work.

Under Megan Brakeley's most transformative mentorship, our intern cohort of four restarted the tradition post COVID of visiting neighboring Vermont farms. Our quest to see how other farmers grew food piqued my interest in the range of experiences Vermont farmers held. In the following summer, using Black Studies as a lens to understand the politics of space, I embarked on a journey to learn more about Black farmers in Vermont. Through conversations, work days, and farmer dinners, I was inspired by the ways in which Black, Indigenous and other farmers of color build resilience, joy, and solidarity through food sovereignty, afrocentric regenerative agriculture, and community oriented earth work. Some of the farmers in these conversations grow as a means to make a living. A couple of them do so as a form of revolutionary praxis. A few farm as a side hustle. All of them explore food as a way to connect with the past, present, and future.

I had found a new entry point to climate work, this time, with resistance, possibility, and care at its center. This J-Term Workshop seeks to highlight the incredible work Black Vermont farmers have been putting into the land and the importance of Black landownership countrywide. This zine is my attempt to show you how possible this *all* is.

I want to especially thank my professors Khyree Davis and Viola Huang, mentor Megan Brakeley, and programs Climate Action Fellowship, New Perennials, Twilight Project, and every single person who took my J-Term Workshop to geek out about the same things I love, for making this project come to life.



The Knoll

w/ Megan Brakeley, CJ Nabung, Caroline Jiao, Lauren Gemery



Community Work and Learn Day @ Soulfire Farm

w/Megan Brakeley, Caroline Jiao, Lauren Gemery



BEHIND THE SCENES --

SUMMER 2023



Planting. Slaughtering.
Weeding. Watering.
@ Khelcom Farm

w/Masrur Chowdhury

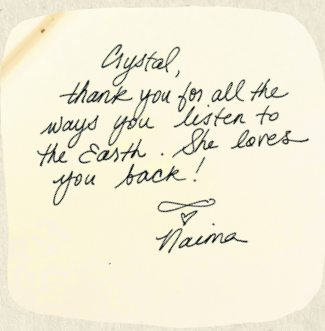


Community Harvest Day @ Conscious Homestead
w/ Cassia Park, Masrur Chowdhury



BEHIND THE SCENES --

SUMMER 2023



Community Work and Learn Day @ Soulfire Farm

w/Aisha Thapaliya, Hayley Fenton, Adie Smith, Cassia Park, Sheila Camacho,
Megan Brakeley, Angela Izi, Tianyu Chen

BEHIND THE SCENES --

SUMMER 2023



Dagara Grief Ceremony @ SUSU Community Farm

w/Marissa Lewis, Chloe Chodorow

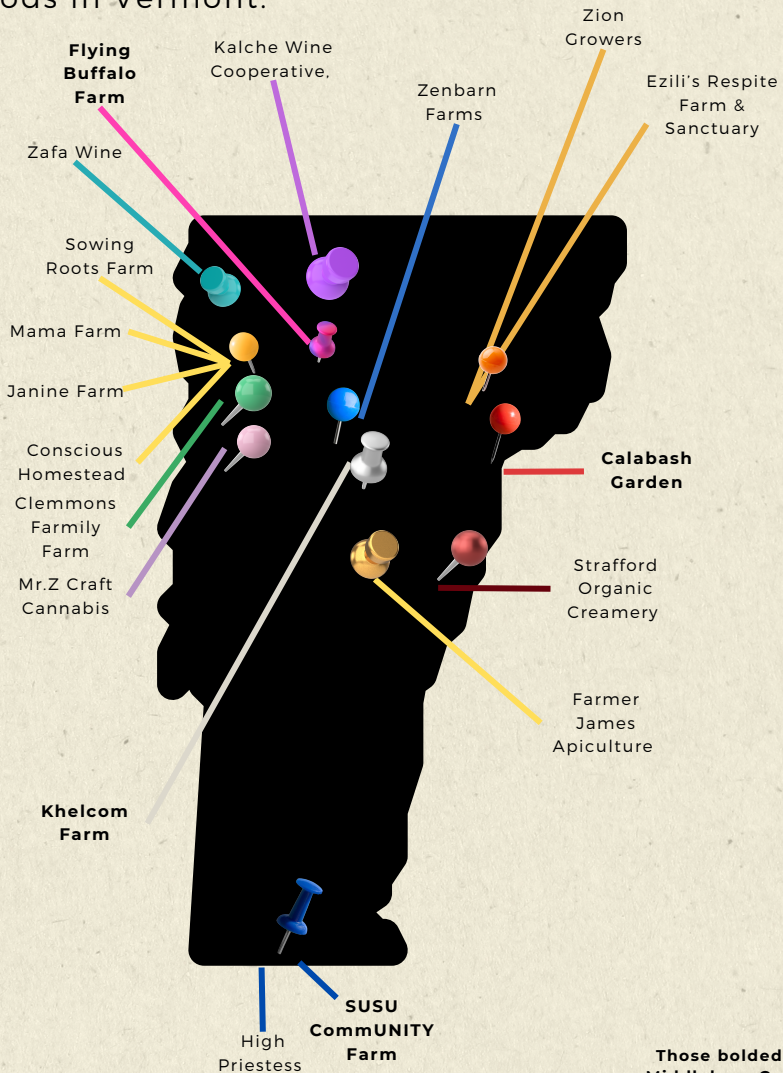


Beekeeping Workshop w/Farmer James Key

w/Cassia Park, Masrur Chowdhury, Tessa Mott, Akbar Ali Aziz Jr.

Research Objectives:

- To investigate the historical context of Black farming in Vermont.
- To examine the current status of Black-owned farms in Vermont.
- To identify challenges and opportunities faced by Black farmers in Vermont.
- To highlight the array of farming techniques, styles, and methods in Vermont.



Those bolded visited
Middlebury College for
Farmer Dinner Series

Data Collection Methods:

Photos: The photos used for the Black Vermont Farms directory came from respective farms' published content. Photos were taken at various points during the summers prior and during the farmer meetings by myself.

Graphics: Canva graphics were primarily utilized in this zine. Participants in the workshop were encouraged to make art in order to embellish their directory pages. I scanned and imported doodles of veggies and the circle of Johnny Jump Ups dancing into the text cited portion. Charlotte Xu created the "abundance" pastel painting on her slide.

Literature Review: The two authors cited, Leah Penniman and Ashante Reese, are two writers who research Black foodways and geography. Quotes are pulled out as a starting place for further question and reflection as a discussion group.

Text: The framework chapter highlight quotes from four books, *Farming While Black*, *Black Food Matters*, *Black Food Geographies*, and *Black Earth Wisdom*. The directory pages contain text from their respective farms' published content. Share outs from the farmer dinners were written by myself and edited and confirmed by the farmers. All other texts, unless otherwise noted, are my words.

Document Analysis: Throughout the zine, General William T. Sherman's Special Field Order 15, *Pigford vs Glickman*, along with the 2017 and 2022 US Census of Agriculture are cited as relevant documents to understand the historical landscape of Black farming in Vermont.

Communication:



SEEKING VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES + WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Good Afternoon!

My name is Crystal Zhou, and I'm a Middlebury College student living in Vermont over the summer. I'm reaching out because I would love to visit, volunteer, and help out at any way shape or form on the farm! Are there any events or classes available over the summer as well?

Best,
Crystal Zhou

FARMER DINNER AT MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Good Morning,

My name is Crystal Zhou, and I'm a senior at Middlebury College. I'm hoping to host a Winter Workshop this January at Middlebury as an extension of my Black Studies Senior Work on Black Vermont Farming. I'm reaching out to invite you to our series of Farmer Dinners!

Throughout my four years, I've found hope in the ongoing planetary crisis by returning to the food system and connecting to farmers working the land. I've had the greatest opportunity to grow alongside the Middlebury Knoll Organic Garden and work with food/advocacy/sustainability/justice oriented organizations in my time in Vermont. There's nothing more empowering and inspiring to me than eating the fruits of one's own labor. It's made me interested in agriculture and how farmers of color center food sovereignty, afro-indigenous regenerative agriculture, and community oriented earth work in their farming. My hope with the winter workshop is to encourage students to engage in community oriented activism and research of their own!

Our Winter Workshop program is hosted by students for students. We are planning to meet twice a week-- Monday to discuss chapters about Black food geographies, and another evening to break bread and eat meals with local Black farmers in the month of January. So any day within the month of January at your convenience. I've been so fortunate to secure funding, and I can compensate you \$500 for your time. We would welcome you to bring some of your own produce to share and come eat dinner with us for a maximum of 2 hours. You're welcome to prepare a presentation on your farming practices and philosophy, but we're mostly interested in building a bridge between Middlebury students and Vermont's vibrant food ways by having a conversation!

Please let me know if this sounds like something you're interested in participating in! I can not emphasize enough how important it is for young people to bear witness to the possibility of climate work. EIPOC farmers know more than anyone else the importance of fostering a diverse and biodiverse ecosystem. Please let me know how we can work together towards a collaboration that feels reciprocal for the both of us.

Warmly,
Crystal Zhou

Field Observations: I visited Black owned farms in Vermont during the summer of 2022 and into the fall of 2023 to observe different farms' farming practices, infrastructure, and community engagement firsthand. I contacted most of the farms during the summer of 2023 for volunteering opportunities, but due to the flooding and other unprecedented circumstances, not all farms were at capacity to host. I visited Soulfire Farm on two separate days for Community Work and Learn Days, Conscious Homestead for their Community Harvest Day, and SUSU Community Farm for the Dagara Grief Ritual. I had the great opportunity to stop by Khelcom Farm on two occasions to drink coffee and plant seedlings. As part of my internship work over the summer of 2023, I invited Farmer James Key to present a workshop on Beekeeping at the Community Farm Day at Does Leap Farm.

Interviews: Participants in the winter workshop conducted semi-structured interviews with Black farmers through a series of 4 farmer dinners. The 4 farmers were chosen to cover a unique range of geographical location, backgrounds, philosophies, and methods. Madison writes in *The Critical Ethnography* that "the interviewee is not an object, but a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story." The intention of sitting down for dinner together also honors that the "interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together." The contents of the conversations shared have been confirmed and approved by the 4 sets of farmers themselves.

Limitations: While the census provides data for federal, state, and local governments, trade associations, and farmers to make decisions about the future of their operation, census participation can be skewed through historical mistrust, cultural beliefs, misinformation, and socio-economic disparities. Other limiting factors might include the way in which the demographics of farm producers are sorted through age, experience, military service, sex, race, and ethnicity, which rarely come close to describing with accuracy the fluid nature of our identity markers.

This project only scratches the surface of the Black food geography in Vermont. Our immense Vermont foodscape is powered by the Black farms in this zine, Black farm workers, Black chefs and caterers, Black distributors, Black food service workers, and of course, the community who support them to make it all happen. Due to the availability of data, time constraints, and ethnical considerations, this report isn't the end all be all of Black Vermont farming, nor should it be so. This zine functions as an entry point for others to get involved and support the work.

Significance and Expected Outcomes: This zine aims to showcase the innumerable contributions Black people has made towards sustainable agriculture, environmental protection, and cultivating community. All of these efforts, which are absolutely vital to combatting climate change, are practiced in different ways, day in and day out in Vermont. Despite this, Black farmers growing food in the whitest state in the United States go through countless systemic racism, intra and interpersonal aggression, and intersectional barriers. I've created this project because Black Vermont Farming matter to me, and it should matter to Vermonters, environmentalists, policy holders, and everyone.

Conclusion:

Black Vermont Farming is born out of an appreciation and curiosity for Black people in the diaspora that work with land. With various frameworks in mind, my workshop examined the legacy of Black environmentalists, the history of Black land ownership in the United States, and the local Black farmers that continue to do the work here in Vermont.

In Vermont in particular, Black Burundese, Haitian, Senegalese, Yoruban, New England, Southern, and so many more traditions influence the way we grow, eat, and tell stories about food. This zine hopes to highlight the different ways Black farmers in Vermont approach food sovereignty, afroindigenous regenerative agriculture, and community oriented earth work. They nourish deeper roots than before, restoring moisture, nutrients, connection, and meaning back to the land.

Perhaps, this zine reminds you of all the stories, movements, and traditions at play of the earth workers in your own community-- your uncle who lives in the countryside, a grandmother who plants peppers on her windowsill, the neighbor with the most spectacular daffodil yard every spring, the local chef that makes their own ferment. These land-based connections are so instinctual they almost go under the radar. In moments of climate catastrophe, we must hold them especially dear and amplify the many ways we have always been able to grow with the land, working in reciprocity, to create beauty, joy, and a collective sense of belonging.

This zine is a love letter to Vermont's potential to nourish diverse roots.

